Does Restrictive Immigration Policy Reduce Terrorism in Western Democracies?

by Seung-Whan Choi

Abstract

Given that immigration policy and terrorism are two hotly debated issues, this study empirically examines the effects of twelve different restrictive policies that Western democratic states use to screen immigrants for terrorism prevention. This study finds mixed effects of restrictive policy alternatives. On the one hand, terrorism is likely to decrease when states impose immigration restrictions based on skill or wealth, or when states offer immigrants limited legal rights that permit only restricted residence and designated employers. On the other hand, terrorism is expected to increase when states allow no special visas or procedures to recruit immigrants, or when states give workers citizenship only when they are born to a native parent. These mixed findings suggest that to deter future terrorist incidents, states should be selective in initiating and implementing new immigration reforms.

Keywords: restrictive immigration policy, terrorism, empirical analysis, Western democracies

Introduction

A recent Pew Research Center survey of ten countries in the European Union indicates that a median of 59 percent of the population consider refugee inflows to be a terrorism risk factor in their country.[1] Responding to this growing concern, many European politicians have called for increasingly restrictive immigration policies to counter emerging terrorist challenges. For example, Marine Le Pen, a French far-right politician, suggested that the 2017 London terrorist attack "underlined the importance of countries being able to protect their borders and stepping up general security measures."[2] Believing immigrants to be a danger to national security, some American leaders have also employed a right-wing populist agenda.[3] For example, on January 27, 2017, President Donald Trump issued an executive order, temporarily blocking entry by citizens of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. The President asserted that "it is the policy of the United States to protect its citizens from foreign nationals who intend to commit terrorist attacks in the United States; and to prevent the admission of foreign nationals who intend to exploit United States immigration laws for malevolent purposes."[4]

Does such a restrictive immigration policy actually reduce the risk of future terrorist attacks? This study addresses this question empirically. While existing studies do not use a quantitative approach, they provide qualitative insights on the potential connection between immigration policy and terrorism.[5] For example, Nowrasteh's terrorism risk analysis of individual visa categories finds that a moratorium on all immigration or tourism is not warranted given that foreign-born terrorist suspects who enter the United States, either as immigrants or tourists, do not necessarily become high security risks.[6] Yet, Krikorian's study advocates an introduction of sustained, across-the-board immigration law enforcement as a way to keep out potential terrorists from American soil.[7] Although these studies have contributed to immigration policy debates in both a constructive and positive way, they are limited in two ways: (1) their scope is limited to largely a single immigration policy restriction, and (2) their method is limited as it uses predominately qualitative approach of inquiry. This study attempts to provide a remedy for these two limitations, given the fact that states are likely to use multiple policy tools to regulate the inflow of immigrants for terrorism prevention and a quantitative inquiry is another instrumental venue to make systematic comparisons of different immigration policies across countries and over years.

Drawing on recently compiled data collected by Peters and Shin, who assess the content of immigration laws and immigrant rights in twelve policy areas in Western, industrialized, and democratic states,[8] this study performs a cross-national, time-series data analysis during the period 1970 to 2007. This study puts forward

evidence that the effects of restrictive immigration policies are mixed. In other words, the risk of terrorism is likely to diminish when states impose reduced immigration based on skill or wealth, or when immigrants are given very limited legal rights (e.g., designated employers and restricted residence). Conversely, the risk of terrorism is likely to increase when states offer no special visas or procedures to recruit laborers or settlers, or when immigrants are given citizenship only through being born to a native father or mother.

Restrictive Immigration Policies and Terrorism

This section discusses how restrictive immigration policies can exert dampening effects on terrorism. States employ numerous policy options to control inflows of immigrants. While some immigration policies are introduced as general security measures, others are devised more specifically in response to terrorist activity. It should be noted that immigration policies that are not designed with terrorism in mind may have potentially unintended consequences as terrorists often exploit them for their own advantages. For analytical purposes, this study categorizes immigration policies into three areas that are further divided into twelve policy alternatives, as shown in Table 1: border regulations (i.e., who gains entry to the state), immigrant rights (i.e., what rights immigrants receive), and enforcement (i.e., how the border is enforced). Border regulations consist of eight subcategories based on nationality, skill, quotas, recruitment, work prohibitions, family reunification, refugee policy, and asylum policy; immigrant rights are classified into citizenship and other rights; and enforcement restrictions includes deportation and other enforcement.[9]

States establish border regulations to decide who to permit inside their territory. All things considered, border regulations may function as the most effective tool to fend off potential terrorists who try to take advantage of immigration loopholes. By imposing strict border regulations (e.g. suspension of visa issuance for countries with a high risk of terrorism, an imposition of a waiting period for background checks on visa issuance, etc.) states may be better able to keep out known, suspected, or potential terrorists from their countries. A traditional way by which states regulate entry is to screen immigrants based on their national origin; in such cases, specific nationalities are not permitted to enter under the pretext of national security.[10]

Table 1 Twelve Immigration Policies

Category	Subcategory	Brief Definition
Border regulations	Nationality	Nationality is used as a basis for immigration restrictions.
	Skill	Restrictions are based on skill or wealth.
	Quotas	The number of immigrants are limited each year.
	Recruitment	States regulate entry by controlling access to their labor markets.
	Work prohibitions	States impose restrictions on industries or positions held.
	Family reunification	Sates allow varying levels of family reunification.
	Refuge policy	Entrance policies are set for refugees outside the state.
	Asylum policy	Entrance policies are set for those claiming refugee status at the border.
Immigrant Rights	Citizenship	States decide who can be a member of the state.
	Other rights	States outline other rights for immigrants.
Enforcement	Deportation	States regulate who and how can be deported.
	Other enforcement	States impose other enforcement measures in place.

President Donald Trump's idea of the travel ban from seven Muslim-majority countries belongs to the category of nationality restrictions. Another way of controlling immigration is to select foreign nationals based on their skills or wealth. By permitting only highly skilled or wealthy foreigners such as top executives and high-level intra-company transfers to their territory, states may be able to curtail the number of potential

terrorists. The rationale for this immigration measure is consistent with the findings of some previous studies: terrorism is rooted in poor socio-economic conditions.[11] Another alternative restriction is through the use of recruitment measures. At times, states may ban recruitment of immigrant workers by invoking a national security exigency; at other times they may allow private companies to recruit workers or they may hire workers for themselves. States may also regulate entry by controlling access to their labor markets, thus limiting the availability of positions in certain industries. Other options include changing levels of family reunification or to use numerical quotas. States can also impose restrictive border regulations by allowing only a small number of refugees and asylum seekers who come from populations suspected of engaging in terrorist activities.[12]

How immigrants are treated may also be crucial in explaining the likelihood of terrorist activities. States may become victims of terrorism if they offer limited politico-legal rights to their immigrants who may have grievances, motivating them to lash out due to their unstable social status as foreign-born residents. One of the important immigrant measures that states can use to restrict the political behavior of immigrants is withholding citizenship, the granting of which would allow the immigrant the same rights as citizens. When immigrants have settled for a long period of time in a host state, it is reasonable for them to expect to become part of the social milieu. Denying an appropriate path to citizenship to long-time residents with no criminal records may increase terrorism because some foreign residents find that their contribution to the host country is not recognized and their socio-legal benefits are almost non-existent. Krueger's study illustrates this phenomenon. [13] After having compared the demographic backgrounds of 63 homegrown terrorists with a sample of approximately 1,000 Muslim Americans, he concludes that non-U.S. citizens are at greater risk of becoming America's homegrown terrorists. Other immigrant rights include the right to own land or run a business, the right to access the welfare system, and even, occasionally, the right to vote. In this regard, Piazza offers useful insights on the behavior of potential terrorists:[14] states may face increased terrorism if they discriminate against ethnic minorities that collectively suffer from disadvantages in income, housing, employment and face unequal access to government social services. Put differently, when immigrants have no access to those rights, they may feel disenchanted, which may increase susceptibility to radicalization and terrorist recruitment. Thus these individuals have a greater risk of turning to terrorist violence against the host government.

Enforcement policy is another means of restricting immigration. Camarota's study examines how 48 foreign-born Al-Qaeda operatives entered and remained in the United States during the period from 1993 to 2001. [15] His study notes that one-fourth of the terrorists were illegal aliens and another fourth had pending asylum applications. The Al-Qaeda operatives knew how to enter the state by exploiting weaknesses in American immigration laws and regulations. Accordingly, precise enforcement mechanisms are necessary given that they can serve as an essential tool to fend off potential terrorists from American soil.[16] The U.S. government, for example, created the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in 2003 within the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is tasked with enforcing the nation's immigration laws in an appropriate, legal and fair manner and it is responsible for apprehending and removing aliens who pose a threat to American national security.[17] When some detainees seek asylum, they can be moved to an alternative detention program and provided access to appropriate resources and advocacy groups.[18]

Lack of effective policy enforcement provides openings that terrorists are able to exploit. Accordingly, it is crucial to enforce existing policies, even harsh ones, in order to deter future terrorist attacks. The enforcement of restrictive immigration policies is applicable only to immigrant terrorists. This means that jihadist terrorists who were born in Western countries and/or radicalized within those countries are likely to escape from the immigration enforcement measures. Deportation may serve as the ultimate tool to enforce immigration laws. Accordingly, states should make clear that terrorist suspects will be deported as quickly as a transparent deportation process allows.[19] Other enforcement measures include employer and carrier sanctions, fences, border patrols, and amnesties for those remaining in the country illegally.

A state's immigration policy purports to regulate and control a certain number of immigrants some of whom may transform into terrorist operatives in the future. Unfortunately, academic and policy circles are in the dark as to how those different restrictions affect the flow of immigrants and the consequent likelihood of terrorism. It is reasonable to speculate that not all restriction policies are equal in their ability to reduce or deter terrorism.

The relative effectiveness of restrictive immigration policies needs to be investigated in order to find the best counterterrorism option.

Research Design

To empirically examine the connection between immigration policy and terrorism, this study collects a cross-national, time-series dataset on ten Western industrialized democracies that are attractive destinations for low-skilled workers during the period 1970 to 2007. The focus of the immigration policy toward *low-skilled* workers is important for this empirical investigation because the game theoretical approach by Bandyopadhyay and Sandler predicts that immigration-receiving states "can curtail its terrorism at home by limiting unskilled labor quotas."[20] In addition, given that previous studies show that many terrorists came from low-class backgrounds,[21] the focus on low-skilled workers is defensible. This study builds a statistical model of terrorism as follows:

$$Terrorism_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * Restrictive\ Immigration\ Policy_{it-1} + \beta_2 * Democracy_{it-1} + \beta_3 * Economic\ Development_{it-1} + \beta_4 * Population_{it-1} + \beta_5 * Muslim_{it-1} + \beta_6 * Post\text{-}Cold\ War_{it} + \varepsilon_{it}$$

where subscript $i = 1,…, N$ indicates the state and subscript $t = 1,…,T$ indexes the year. $Terrorism_{it}$ is the outcome variable; β_0 is an intercept; β_1 through β_6 are coefficients for explanatory variables; and ε_{it} is an error term. All the explanatory variables except for *Post-Cold War* on the right-hand side are lagged by one year to ensure that the events of the explanatory variable occurred before the outcome variable.

The outcome variable – *Terrorism* – comes from Enders, Sandler, and Gaibulloev who systematically subdivided La Free and Dugan's Global Terrorism Database into domestic and transnational terrorist incidents.[22] Because immigration-receiving countries can be subjects of either domestic or transnational terrorism, this study operationalizes terrorism in three different ways: (1) the total number of terrorist incidents, including both domestic and transnational attacks, (2) the total number of domestic terrorist incidents, and (3) the total number of transnational terrorist incidents. When the perpetrators and victims are from the same country, an act of violence is defined as domestic terrorism (e.g., the nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway in March 1995). Transnational terrorism is an act of violence that involves at least two different nationals (e.g., the destruction of the Khobar Towers that housed US airmen in June 1996 near Dhahran, Saudi Arabia). Enders, Sandler, and Gaibulloev's data compilation spans from 1970 to 2007, so the statistical analysis of this study is confined to that period.

The main explanatory variable – restrictive immigration policy – is taken from Peters who measured the variation of immigration policy based upon reading actual immigration laws, regulations, and the executive's policy discretionary action,[23] and Shin who updated and expanded Peters' data collection.[24] Given that the recent debates on the connection between immigration and terrorism have revolved around the U.S. and Europe, this study chooses to include ten industrialized states in the sample: the U.S., U.K., Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, and Switzerland.[25]

Table 2 shows the average immigration policy composite scores for each state along with the average total terrorist incidents. The United States appears to have the most restrictive immigration policy among the ten industrialized states, though it did not experience the highest number of terrorist incidents. Germany has the second most restrictive immigration policy, followed by France and Canada. Because New Zealand scores the least on immigration policy and terrorist incidents, it may seem to be an outlier among the ten sample countries. However, the main findings that are discussed in the next section do not change even after New Zealand is excluded from the Western democracies.

Table 2 Average Total Terrorist Incidents and Immigration Policy Scores

State	Total Terrorist Incident	Immigration Policy Score
Australia	1.500	1.629
Canada	1.053	2.269
France	27.053	2.347
Germany	21.000	2.811
Netherlands	2.447	2.097
New Zealand	0.316	1.392
Spain	66.526	1.463
Switzerland	2.526	2.090
United Kingdom	14.079	1.686
United States	31.026	2.821

Each of the twelve alternative measures of immigration policy that are compiled by Peters and Shin has values, ranging from 1 (most restrictive) to 5 (most liberal).[26] Using principal component analysis, Peters and Shin construct a composite measure that combines all twelve immigration restriction policies. Higher values of the composite measure means a more open policy. Because the focus of this study is the restrictiveness rather than openness of national immigration policy, this study re-records those measures for ease of interpretation, with higher values signaling a more restrictive policy.

To account for omitted variable bias, this study includes five confounding factors that have been regarded as significant factors of terrorism in previous studies: democracy, economic development, population, Muslim, and post-Cold War. Other variables such as involvement in conflict and foreign intervention are not included in the model because previous studies already document them well and also because too many controls tend to complicate the estimation results.[27] Even when these controls are included in the model, the main findings that are discussed in the Empirical Results section do not alter. Their estimated results are not reported to economize space.

Democracies are expected to experience more terrorist attacks than autocracies on the grounds that they allow more freedom of expression and movement.[28] The democracy variable is collected from the Polity dataset; it is a composite index on a scale of -10 (full autocracy) to 10 (full democracy).[29]

Since more industrialized economies tend to create fewer economic grievances, they should face a smaller risk of terrorism.[30] However, it should be noted that the role of economic grievances in terrorism is far from clear, as previous studies showed mixed and inconclusive findings. For the purposes of this study, economic development is operationalized with the log of GDP per capita, gathered from the World Bank's *World Development Indicators 2017*.

Empirical studies by Choi and Eyerman demonstrate that highly populated countries have greater trouble providing adequate security for their large populations; therefore they are likely to run a greater risk of terrorism.[31] Data for total population are garnered from the World Bank's *World Development Indicators 2017*. This study takes a logarithm of the population variable to make positively skewed distribution more normal, which better satisfies the assumption that the variable should be normally distributed in a statistical sense.

Several previous studies deem a sizable Muslim population to be a significant factor for the occurrence of terrorism.[32] Muslim is measured by the percentage of Muslims in the country's population. The data is obtained from the Religious Characteristics of States dataset.[33]

The end of the Soviet funding of left-wing groups led to a decrease of terrorist attacks in the post-Cold War era. [34] To account for the systemic decrease in terrorist activity since the end of the Cold War, a post-Cold War

variable is created. The post-Cold War variable is recoded as 1 since 1991 and 0 otherwise.

Because the outcome variable – *Terrorism* – is a count measure, this study decides to run a negative binomial regression with Huber-White robust standard errors clustered by country. Although this study also considers Poisson regression as the baseline model, it does not fit the data well, as noted by the Pearson goodness-of-fit chi-squared test that is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 8169.509$, $p < 0.00001$). The negative binomial maximum-likelihood regression performs much better for the terrorism data in which the variance, 968.91, is much larger than its mean, 16.48, indicating the problem of overdispersion. Negative binomial regression adds a dispersion parameter to model the unobserved heterogeneity among observations; this allows the variance to exceed the mean, thus correcting for the overdispersion found in Poisson regression models.[35]

Empirical Results

In this section, this study first presents the overall effect of the twelve restrictive immigration policies on terrorism and then moves onto an individual effect of each policy alternative.

Table 3 shows estimated results of negative binomial regression in which a composite indicator for the twelve policy restriction options is tested against terrorism. In Models 1 through 3, the coefficients on *Restrictive Immigration Policy* are not significantly different from zero. This implies that regardless of the measures of the political violence, restrictive immigration policy has little to do with terrorism one way or another. When states try to prevent future terrorist attacks by introducing more restrictive immigration policies, their effectiveness appears to be dubious. Among the five control variables, the indicator for *Population* emerges as a significant, positive predictor of terrorism across the table. As hypothesized, states with a large number of populations are disposed to experience a greater risk of terrorism. This result may sound counterintuitive when one looks at the single case of the United States that has far fewer foreign fighters than the United Kingdom, despite vastly greater population size. However, when one interprets the estimated coefficient as representing the average role of the population size among the ten sample countries, its positive effect should make sense. The other control variables such as *Democracy*, *Economic Development*, *Muslim*, and *Post-Cold War* are shown to be inconsistent factors in predicting terrorism.

Table 3 Effect of Restrictive Immigration Policy on Terrorism

Variable	Total Incidents Model 1	Domestic Incidents Model 2	Transnational Incidents Model 3
Restrictive Immigration Policy$_{it-1}$	-0.013	0.001	0.072
	(0.479)	(0.528)	(0.557)
Democracy$_{it-1}$	-0.012	-0.022	-0.011
	(0.069)	(0.078)	(0.069)
Economic Development$_{it-1}$	-1.520	-1.667	-1.635
	(0.936)	(0.995)	(0.974)
Population$_{it-1}$	0.670***	0.776***	0.477*
	(0.202)	(0.197)	(0.232)
Muslim$_{it-1}$	0.052	0.029	0.126**
	(0.059)	(0.076)	(0.044)
Post-Cold War$_{it}$	0.056	0.285	-0.511
	(0.495)	(0.579)	(0.381)
Intercept	10.933	10.934	12.696
	(7.655)	(8.502)	(8.149)
Pseudo R^2	0.07	0.08	0.07
Dispersion = 1	29.32	30.71	8.42
Observations	367	367	367

Note: Robust standard errors, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, two-tailed tests.

One may assert that much of the terrorism that occurred in Europe during the 1970s and 1980s had little to do with immigration. This assertion begs the question: What would happen to the significance of the *Restrictive Immigration Policy* variable if the data for the 1970s and 1980s are not used for the estimation? And also, what would happen if the model takes into account some measures of immigration in each country besides the policy variable? Table 4 directly deals with these two questions. The estimates are produced after the study period is limited to the years since 1990, which causes the dropping of the *Post-Cold War* variable in the estimation due to a lack of variation, and after an indicator for international migrant stock as a percentage of the total population whose data is available only since 1990 is added in the model specification.[36] As long as the *Restrictive Immigration Policy* variable is concerned, it still remains as an insignificant predictor of terrorism.

Table 4 Effect of Restrictive Immigration Policy on Terrorism: Robustness Test

Variable	Total Incidents Model 1	Domestic Incidents Model 2	Transnational Incidents Model 3
Restrictive Immigration Policy$_{it-1}$	0.152	-0.076	0.295
	(0.278)	(0.297)	(0.334)
Migration Stock$_{it-1}$	-0.082*	-0.112*	-0.005
	(0.037)	(0.050)	(0.019)
Democracy$_{it-1}$	-0.681*	-1.928***	1.264***
	(0.274)	(0.445)	(0.210)
Economic Development$_{it-1}$	-2.270	-1.800	-3.495***
	(1.264)	(1.618)	(0.957)
Population$_{it-1}$	0.564*	0.656*	0.382*
	(0.250)	(0.280)	(0.184)
Muslim$_{it-1}$	-0.135*	-0.355***	0.276***
	(0.053)	(0.078)	(0.060)
Post-Cold War$_{it}$	dropped	dropped	dropped
Intercept	27.084**	34.667**	18.656*
	(9.679)	(11.180)	(7.489)
Pseudo R^2	0.11	0.15	0.06
Dispersion = 1	11.50	8.81	7.69
Observations	168	168	168

Note: Robust standard errors, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, two-tailed tests.

A composite index for the twelve immigration policies is unable to discern an independent effect of each restriction alternative on terrorism. Table 5 delves into the individual effects of the twelve restrictive immigration policies. The estimated results display interesting causal connections between policy alternatives and terrorism. The relationships are mixed: while some immigration policies help to reduce the risk of terrorist incidents, others either contribute to an increase of terrorism or else exert no significant effect. For example, border regulations based especially on nationality criteria appears to have no bearing on terrorism. Given that this null finding is based on the ten sample states including the United States, it is intriguing to ponder about President Donald Trump's attempts to introduce the travel ban on citizens of seven Muslim-majority countries. The empirical evidence makes his claim unfounded despite the fact that his original logic may have pleased the ears of the right wing.

Table 5 Effects of Individual Restrictive Immigration Policies on Terrorism

Variable	Total Model 1	Domestic Model 2	Transnational Model 3
Border Regulations			
Universality by Nationality$_{it-1}$	0.043	0.025	-0.090
	(0.055)	(0.075)	(0.051)
Skill Level Restrictions$_{it-1}$	-0.446***	-0.329**	-0.348*
	(0.097)	(0.126)	(0.163)
Quota$_{it-1}$	-0.127	-0.171	-0.097
	(0.128)	(0.229)	(0.111)
Immigrant Recruitment Policy$_{it-1}$	0.953***	1.116***	0.975***
	(0.138)	(0.182)	(0.156)
Restrictions on Labor Market Participation$_{it-1}$	0.401	0.321	0.495
	(0.259)	(0.170)	(0.421)
Family Reunification Policy$_{it-1}$	-0.110	-0.110	-0.291
	(0.157)	(0.214)	(0.258)
Refugee Policy$_{it-1}$	0.072	0.220**	-0.124
	(0.078)	(0.069)	(0.129)
Asylum Policy$_{it-1}$	0.112	-0.032	0.260
	(0.109)	(0.136)	(0.153)
Immigration Rights			
Citizenship$_{it-1}$	1.107***	0.636**	1.942***
	(0.205)	(0.246)	(0.253)
Other Rights Given to Immigrants$_{it-1}$	-0.676***	-0.878***	-0.648**
	(0.196)	(0.229)	(0.212)
Enforcement			
Deportation Policy$_{it-1}$	0.198	0.311	0.199*
	(0.124)	(0.181)	(0.091)
Other Enforcement Policy$_{it-1}$	-0.081	-0.132	0.091
	(0.140)	(0.146)	(0.205)
Democracy$_{it-1}$	0.094***	0.094***	0.088***
	(0.009)	(0.007)	(0.016)
Economic Development$_{it-1}$	-0.576	0.338	-2.288***
	(0.731)	(0.993)	(0.658)
Population$_{it-1}$	0.936***	1.023***	0.763*
	(0.180)	(0.143)	(0.343)
Muslim$_{it-1}$	-0.208*	-0.284***	-0.071
	(0.098)	(0.062)	(0.215)
Post-Cold War$_{it}$	-0.030	0.048	-0.246
	(0.320)	(0.422)	(0.288)
Intercept	-5.497	-15.408	10.537
	(7.827)	(9.803)	(10.866)
Pseudo R^2	0.16	0.18	0.16
Dispersion = 1	10.36	11.46	4.02
Observations	367	367	367

Note: Robust standard errors, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, two-tailed tests.

Skill Level Restrictions and *Other Rights Given to Immigrants* emerge as significant, negative factors of terrorism. *Immigrant Recruitment Policy* and *Citizenship* also achieve significancebut in a counterintuitive way. These findings show that terrorism is likely to decrease when states restrict immigration to only those who are highly educated and/or are high income earners, or when states specify how immigrants are registered, where they can live and/or who their employers are. By contrast, terrorism is likely to increase when states provide no

special visas or procedures to recruit labor or settlers who are then likely to enter the state illegally, or when citizenship is given only by birth from a native father or mother.

The estimated coefficients reported in Table 5 are not suitable for gauging the relative importance of individual restriction policies because they are not standardized, measured in their natural units. To examine which policy alternative is more influential or substantive in preventing future terrorist incidents, this study makes a few methodological adjustments. This study takes a log of terrorist incidents—the outcome variable, after adding 1 to the base. This transformation enables this study to run an ordinary least squares regression model that produces standardized coefficients to compare. Table 6 reports the results.

Which restrictive policy is more effective in reducing acts of terrorism, *Skill Level Restrictions* or *Other Rights Given to Immigrants*? It turns out that the latter is more influential than the former. This suggests that it is more important to address the experience of immigrants in a state after arrival rather than trying to keep certain categories of people out in the first place. To see which policy alternative is more likely to increase terrorism, this study compares the magnitudes of *Immigrant Recruitment Policy* and *Citizenship*. This study finds that the former is larger than the latter.

Concluding Remarks

Current scholarship offers no systematic empirical analysis on the controversy surrounding the effects of restrictive immigration policies on terrorism. This study builds a first-cut empirical model to help begin to clarify this issue. The rationale for the statistical model is that states have an important role to play in screening immigrants who wish to enter their territory and also to exclude those who pose a potential threat to national security. This study finds the estimated results analogous to a double-edged sword. The twelve different restriction options produce both favorable and unfavorable effects on terrorist activity. This finding suggests that to challenge terrorist threats, states should make a strategic choice in policymaking because not all restrictive policies yield the intended, fruitful outcomes. States should think hard about what policy areas they need to improve and concentrate for terrorism prevention. For example, states can selectively choose some specific immigration measures such as launching start-up visa programs to attract highly skilled foreign entrepreneurs and/or improving the fundamental rights of immigrants as a means to avert possible terrorist grievances.

The empirical analysis of this study that identifies some common ground in immigration policy should be politically appealing to everyone except the right and left political fringe that drives immigration policy debate. Yet, since the outcome variable of this study is general terrorist incidents, it does not take into account the mobilization of foreign fighters (which in some countries were substantial during the period in question). Future research should look into the determinants of terrorism that was carried out exclusively by foreign fighters. It may also be interesting to look at Islamist terrorism that did not begin in the sample countries until at least the 1990s.

Table 6 Relative Importance of Restrictive Immigration Policies

Variable	Total Model 1	Domestic Model 2	Transnational Model 3
Border Regulations			
Universality by Nationality$_{it-1}$	0.102	0.162	-0.013
Skill Level Restrictions$_{it-1}$	-0.258	-0.216	-0.134
Quota$_{it-1}$	-0.019	-0.040	0.014
Immigrant Recruitment Policy$_{it-1}$	0.593	0.380	0.469
Restrictions on Labor Market Participation$_{it-1}$	0.219	0.153	0.128
Family Reunification Policy$_{it-1}$	-0.073	-0.028	-0.177
Refugee Policy$_{it-1}$	0.104	0.231	-0.008
Asylum Policy$_{it-1}$	0.097	0.095	0.235
Immigration Rights			
Citizenship$_{it-1}$	0.533	0.114	0.560
Other Rights Given to Immigrants$_{it-1}$	-0.408	-0.250	-0.176
Enforcement			
Deportation Policy$_{it-1}$	0.114	0.129	0.123
Other Enforcement Policy$_{it-1}$	-0.109	-0.106	0.035
Democracy$_{it-1}$	0.064	0.183	0.204
Economic Development$_{it-1}$	-0.401	0.065	-0.400
Population$_{it-1}$	0.594	0.727	0.450
Muslim$_{it-1}$	-0.182	-0.399	-0.152
Post-Cold War$_{it}$	0.161	0.066	-0.037
Observations	367	367	367

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Notes

[1] Bruce Stokes, "The Immigration Crisis Is Tearing Europe Apart," *Foreign Policy*, (2016).

[2] Jon Henley, "Anti-Immigration Politicians Link London Attack to Migrant Policy," *The Guardian*, (March 23, 2017).

[3] 68% of respondents in a U.S. national survey, for example, blame lack of immigration enforcement laws and border control for the 9/11 attacks, though the terrorists entered the U.S. legally as visa students and not as immigrants. Howard Adelman, "Canadian Borders and Immigration Post 9/11," *International Migration Review*, vol. 36, no. 1 (2002), 15-28.

[4] *New York Times*, "Full Executive Order Text," (January 27, 2017).

[5] This study examines immigration policy, not inflows of immigrants. The former refers to any policy of a state that deals with the transit of people across its borders into the country, while the latter looks at the total number of immigrants from a sending state into a receiving state. For the latter, see Vincenzo Bove and Tobias Böhmelt, "Does Immigration Induce Terrorism?" *Journal of Politics*, vol. 78, no. 2 (2016), 572-588. This study also explores the effect of immigration policy on terrorism, not the effect of terrorism on immigration policy. For the latter, see Alex Schmid, "Links between Terrorism and Migration," The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague, vol. 7, no. 4 (2016), 1-63; Terri, Givens, Gary Freeman, and David Leal, (Eds.) *Immigration Policy and Security* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

[6] Alex Nowrasteh, "Terrorism and Immigration," Cato Institute Policy Analysis, no. 798 (2016).

[7] Mark Krikorian, "Keeping Terror Out." *National Interest*, no. 75 (2004),77-85.

[8] Margaret Peters, "Open Trade, Closed Borders," *World Politics*, vol. 67, no. 1 (2015), 114-154; Margaret Peters, "Online Appendix B," (2012), URL: http://www.maggiepeters.com/uploads/8/3/0/8/83081968/appendix_b_coding_2012_09_20.pdf; Adrian Shin, "Tyrants and Migrants," *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 50, no. 1 (2017),14-40.

[9] Peters, "Open Trade, Closed Borders," op. cit.; Peters, "Online Appendix B," op. cit.

[10] Seung-Whan Choi, *New Explorations into International Relations* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2016).

[11] See Seung-Whan Choi, "American Jihad, Muslim Americans, and the General Public," in Seung-Whan Choi, *Emerging Security Challenges* (Santa Babara: Praeger, 2018), 1-25; Seung-Whan Choi, "America's Homegrown Jihadists and Foreign Fighting," in Seung-Whan Choi, *Emerging Security Challenges*, 27-52; Seung-Whan Choi, "Economic Growth and Terrorism," *Oxford Economic Papers*, vol. 67, no. 1 (2015), 157-181; Seung-Whan Choi and Shali Luo, "Economic Sanctions, Poverty, and International Terrorism," *International Interactions*, vol. 39, no. 2 (2013), 217-245.

[12] Nowrasteh, "Terrorism and Immigration," op. cit.; Nazli Avdan, "Do Asylum Recognition Rates in Europe Respond to Transnational Terrorism?" *European Union Politics*, vol. 15, no. 4 (2014), 445-471.

[13] Alan Krueger, "What Makes a Homegrown Terrorist?" *Economic Letters*, vol. 101, no. 3 (2008), 293-296.

[14] James Piazza, "Poverty, Minority Economic Discrimination and Domestic Terrorism," *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 48, no. 3 (2011), 339-353.

[15] Steven Camarota, "The Open Door," Center Paper 21 (Washington, DC: Center for Immigration Studies, 2002).

[16] Krikorian, "Keeping Terror Out," op. cit.

[17] See URL: https://www.ice.gov/about.

[18] Avdan, "Do Asylum Recognition Rates in Europe Respond to Transnational Terrorism?" op. cit.

[19] Mark Elliott, "United Kingdom," *International Journal of Constitutional Law*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2010), 131-145.

[20] Subhayu Bandyopadhyay and Todd Sandler, "Immigration Policy and Counterterrorism," *Journal of Public Economy*, vol. 110 (2014), 122.

[21] Choi, "American Jihad, Muslim Americans, and the General Public," op. cit.; Choi, "Economic Growth and Terrorism," op. cit.; Choi and Luo, "Economic Sanctions, Poverty, and International Terrorism," op. cit.

[22] Walter Enders, Todd Sandler, and Khusrav Gaibulloev, "Domestic versus Transnational Terrorism," *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 48, no. 3 (2011), 319-337; Gary La Free and Laura Dugan, "Introducing the Global Terrorism Database," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol. 19, no. 2 (2007), 181-204.

[23] Peters, "Open Trade, Closed Borders," op. cit.; Peters, "Online Appendix B," op. cit.

[24] Shin, "Tyrants and Migrants," op. cit.[25] The immigration data for Spain come from Shin and those for the other states are garnered from Peters. See Shin, "Tyrants and Migrants," op. cit.; Peters, "Open Trade, Closed Borders," op. cit.; Peters, "Online Appendix B," op. cit. Australia and New Zealand are included in the data analysis because they have also experienced terrorism and because they are included in Peters' original data collection. When the two countries are excluded, the main findings are similar to those reported in the Empirical Results section.

[26] The twelve restrictions are (1) entry discrimination based on nationality, (2) entry discrimination based on skills or income, (3) ease of naturalization or citizenship acquisition, (4) immigrant rights such as political, legal, or welfare rights, (5) number of refugees allowed to enter, (6) ease of getting an asylum, (7) visas or government programs, (8) labor-market restrictions for immigrants, (9) deportable offenses and administrative processes, (10) border enforcement or employment screening, (11) sponsorship by citizenship and restrictions, and (12) percentage of population allowed to enter annually.

[27] See Christopher Achen, "Toward a New Political Methodology," *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 5 (2002), 423-450.

[28] James Piazza, "The Cost of Living and Terror," *Southern Economic Journal*, vol. 79, no. 4 (2013), 812-831; Joe Eyerman, "Terrorism and Democratic States," *International Interactions*, vol. 24, no. 2 (1998), 151-170. For a dissenting view, see Seung-Whan Choi, "Fighting Terrorism through the Rule of Law?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 54, no. 6 (2010), 940-966.

[29] Monty Marshall and Keith Jaggers, POLITY IV Project, (2014), URL: http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html.

[30] Choi, "Economic Growth and Terrorism," op. cit.

[31] Choi, "Fighting Terrorism through the Rule of Law?" op. cit.; Eyerman, "Terrorism and Democratic States," op. cit.

[32] For example, James Piazza, "A Supply-Side View of Suicide Terrorism," *Journal of Politics*, vol. 70, no. 1 (2008), 28-39.

[33] Davis Brown and Patrick James, Religious Characteristics of States Dataset, Phase 1: Demographics (2015), URL: http://www.thearda.com/Archive/Files/Codebooks/BROWN_CB.asp.

[34] Walter Enders and Todd Sandler, "Transnational Terrorism in the Post-Cold War Era," *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 43, no. 1 (1999), 145-167.

[35] See Joseph Hilbe, *Negative Binomial Regression* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[36] Migration Policy Institute tabulation of data from the United Nations, (2017), URL: http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.shtml.